

THE SPLENDID SPUR

OR

THE ADVENTURES OF JACK MARVEL.

By ARTHUR T. QUILLER COUCH.

CHAPTER II.

"Ha!" he cried, pulling off his primed hat and bowing low. "A scholar, I perceive! Let me serve you, sir. Here is the 'History of St. George'—and he picked out a thin brown quarto and held it up—'written by Master Peter Heylin; a ripe book, they tell me (though, to be sure, I never read beyond the title), and the price a poor two shillings.'"

Now, all this while I was considering what to do. So, as I put my hand in my pocket and drew out the shillings, I said very slowly, looking him in the eyes (but softly, so that the lackey might not hear):

"So thus you feed your expenses at the dice; and my shilling, no doubt, is for Luke Settle, as well as the rest."

For the moment, under my look, he went white to the lips; then clapped his hand to his sword, withdrew it, and answered me, red as a turkey cock:

"Shalt be a parson, yet, Master Scholar; but art in a great hurry, it seems."

Now, I had ever a quick temper, and as he turned on his heel, was like to have meddled and raised a brawl. My own meddled tongue had brought the rebuff upon me; but yet my heart was hot as he walked away.

I was standing there and looking after him, turning over in my hand the "Life of St. George," when my fingers were aware of a slip of paper between the pages. Pulling it out, I saw 'twas scribbled over with writing and figures, as follows:

"Mr. Anthony Killigrew, his acct for Oct. 20th, MDCCXLII.—For herrings, 2d.; for coffee, 4d.; for scowring my coat, 6d.; at bowls, 5s. 10d.; for bleeding, 1s. 0d.; for ye King's speech, 8d.; for spied wine (with Marjory), 2s. 4d.; for seeing ye Rhinoceros, 4d.; at ye Ranter-ground, 6s. 6d.; for a pair of silver buttons, 2s. 6d.; for apples, 2s. 6d.; for ale, 6d.; at ye dice, 17s. 5s.; for spied wine (again), 4s. 6d." And so on.

As I glanced my eye down this paper, my anger oozed away, and a great feeling of pity came over me, not only at the name of Anthony—the name I had heard spoken in the bowling green last night—but also to see the monstrous item of 17s. 5s. spent on the dice. "Twice as a boy, too, after all, that I was angry with, that had spent fourpence to see the rhinoceros at a fair, and rode on the ranter-ground (with 'Marjory,' no doubt, as 'twas for her, no doubt, the silver buttons were bought). So that, with quick forgiveness, I hurried after him, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

He stood by the entrance, counting up his money, and drew himself up very stiff.

"I think, sir, this paper is yours."

"I thank you," he answered, taking it, and crying me, "Is there anything, besides, you wished to say?"

"A great deal, maybe, if your name be Anthony."

"Master Anthony Killigrew is my name, sir; now serving under Lord Bernard Stewart in His Majesty's troop of guards."

"And mine is Jack Marvel," said I.

"Of the Yorkshire Marvells?"

"Why, yes; though but a shoot of that good stock, transplanted to Cumberland, and there sadly withered."

"'Tis no matter, sir," said he politely; "I shall be proud to cross swords with you."

"Why, bless your heart!" I cried out, full of laughter at this childish pun: "I think I came to fight you."

"If not, sir," and he grew colder than ever—"you are going a deuced roundabout way to avoid it."

Upon this, finding no other way out of it, I began my tale at once; but hardly had come to the meeting of the two men on the bowling-green, when he interrupts me politely:

"I think, Master Marvel, as yours is like to be a story of some moment, I will send this fellow back to my lodgings. He's a low-eared dog that I am saving from the gallows for so long as my conscience allows me. The shower is done, I see; so if you know of a retired spot, we will talk there more at our leisure."

He dismissed his lackey, and stroll'd off with me to the Trinity Grove, where, walking up and down, I told him all I had heard and seen the night before.

"And now," said I, "can you tell me if you have any such enemy as this white-haired man, with the limping gait?"

He had come to a halt, sucking in his lips and seeming to reflect.

"I know one man," he began; "but no—'tis impossible."

"I think," said I, "you had better be considering what to do."

He laugh'd outright this time; and resting with his legs cross'd, against the trunk of an elm, twist'd an end of his long lovelocks, and looked at me comically. Said he: "Tell me, Jack, is there aught in me that offends thee?"

"Why, no," I answered. "I think you're a proper young man—such as I should loathe to see spoil'd by Master Settle's knife."

"Art not quick at friendship, Jack. But better at advising; only in this case fortune has prevented thy good offices. Hark ye," he leaned forward and glanced to right and left, "if these 'twain intend my hurt—as indeed 'twould seem—they lose their labor. For this very night I ride from Oxford."

"And why is that?"

"'Till tell thee, Jack, though I deserve to be shot, I am bound with a letter from His Majesty to the Army of the West, where I have friends, for my

father's sake—Sir Denkim Killigrew of Gleys, in Cornwall. 'Tis a sweet country, they say, though I have never seen it."

"Not seen thy father's country?"

"Why, no—for he married a Frenchwoman, Jack. God rest her dear soul!"—he lifted his hat—"and settled in that country, near Morlaix, in Brittany, among my mother's kin; my grandfather refusing to see or speak with him for wedding a poor woman without his consent. And in France was I born and bred, and came to England two years ago; and this last July the old curmudgeon died. So that my father, who was an only son, is even now in England returning to his estates; and with him my only sister, Della. I shall meet them on the way. To think of it!" (and I declare the tears sprang to his eyes) "Della will be a woman grown, and ah! to see dear Cornwall together!"

"'Tis a ticklish business," said I after a minute, "to carry the King's letter. Not one in four of his messengers comes through, they say. But since it keeps you from the dice—"

"That's true. To-night I make an end."

"To-night?"

"Why, yes. To-night I go for my revenge, and ride straight from the inn door."

"Then I go with you to the 'Crown'?"

I cried, very positive.

He dropped playing with his curls, and looked me in the face, his mouth twitching with a queer smile.

"And so thou shalt, Jack; but why?"

"I'll give no reason," said I, and knew I was blushing.

"Then be at the corner of All Hallows' Church in Turl street at seven to-night. I lodge over Master Simon's, the glover, and must be about my affairs. Jack," he came near and took my hand—"am sure thou lovest me."

He nodded, with another cordial smile, and went his way up the grove, his amber cloak flaunting like a belated butterfly under the leafless trees; and so passed out of my sight.

CHAPTER III.

I Find Myself in a Tavern Brawl; and Barely Escape.

It wanted, maybe, a quarter to 7 that evening when, passing out at the college gate on my way to All Hallows' Church, I saw under the lantern there a man loitering and talking with the porter. 'Twas Master Anthony's lackey; and as I came up he held out a note for me.

"Dear Jack"

"Wee goe to the 'Crown' at VI. o'clock, I having mett with Captain Settle, who is on dewty with the horse to-night, and must to Abendon by IX. I looke for you."

"Your unfayned loving"

"A. K."

"The bearer has left by servise, and his helth concerns me nott. See kikk him if he harrie."

This last advice I had no time to carry out with any thoroughness; but being put in a great dread by this change of hour, pelted off toward the Corn Market as fast as legs could carry me.

The windows of the "Crown" were cheerfully lit behind their red blinds. A few straddling grooms and troopers talked and spat in the brightness of the entrance, and outside in the street was a servant leading up and down a beautiful sorrel mare, ready saddled, that was marked on the near hind leg with a high white stocking. In the passage I met the host of the "Crown," Master John Davenant.

"Top of the stairs," says he, indicating my way, "and open the door ahead of you, if yare the young gentleman Master Killigrew spoke of."

I had my foot on the bottom step, when from the room above comes the crash of a table upsetting, with a noise of broken glass, chairs thrust back, and a racket of outcries. Next moment the door was burst open, letting out a flood of light and curses; and down flies a drawer, three steps at a time, with a red stain of wine trickling down his white face.

"Murder!" he gasped out; and sitting down on a stair, fell to mopping his face, all sick and trembling.

I was dashing past him, with three men came tumbling out of the door, and downstairs. I squeezed myself against the wall to let them pass, but Master Davenant was pitched to the very foot of the stairs. And then he picked himself up and ran out in the Corn Market, the drawer after him, and both shouting "Watch! Watch!" at the top of their lungs, and so left the three fellows to push by the women already gathered in the passage, and gain the street at their ease. All this happened while a man could count twenty; and in half a minute I heard the ring of steel and was standing in the doorway.

There was now no light within but what was shed by the fire and two tallow candles that guttered on the mantelsheif. The remaining candlesticks lay in a pool of wine on the floor, amid broken glasses, bottles, scattered coins, dice boxes and pewter pots. In the corner to my right cowered a potboy, with tankard angling in his hand, and the contents spilling into his shoes. His wide, terrified eyes were fixed on the far end of the room, where Anthony and the brute Settle stood, with a shattered chair between them. Their swords were crossed in tierce, and grating together as each sought occasion for a lunge; which might have been fair enough but for a dog-faced trooper in a frowsy, black periwig, who, as I entered, was gathering a handful of coins from under the fallen table, and now ran across, sword in hand, to the captain's aid.

'Twas Anthony that faced me, with his heel against the wainscoting, and, catching my cry of alarm, he call'd out cheerfully over the captain's shoulder, but without lifting his eyes:

"Just in time, Jack! Take off the second cur, that's a sweet boy!"

Now, I carried no sword; but seizing the tankard from the potboy's hand, I hurl'd it at the dog-faced trooper. It struck him fair between the shoulder blades; and with a yell of pain he spun round and came toward me, his point glittering in a way that turn'd me cold. I gave him a pace, snatch'd up a chair (that luckily had a wooden seat) and with my back against the door, waited his charge.

'Twas in this posture that, flinging a glance across the room, I saw the Captain's sword describe a small circle of light, and next moment, with a sharp cry, Anthony caught at the blade, and stagger'd against the wall, pin'd through the chest to the wainscoting.

"Out with the lights, Dick!" bawld Settle, tugging out his point. "Quick, fool—the window!"

Dick, with a back sweep of his hand, sent the candles flying off the shelf, and, save for the flicker of the hearth, we were in darkness. I felt, rather than saw, his rush toward me; leap'd aside; and brought down my chair with a crash on his skull. He went down like a ninepin, but scrambled up in a trice, and was running for the window. There was a shout below as the Captain thrust the lattice open; another, and the two dark forms had clambered through the purple square of the casement, and dropp'd into the bowling-green below.

By this, I had made my way across the room, and found Anthony sunk against the wall, with his feet outstretched. There was something he held out toward me, groping for my hand and at the same time whispering in a thick, choking voice:

"Here, Jack, here; pocket it quick!"

'Twas a letter, and as my fingers closed on it they met a damp smear, the meaning of which was but too plain.

"Button it—sharp—in thy breast; now feel for my sword."

"First let me tend thy hurt, dear lad."

"Nay—quickly, my sword! 'Tis pretty, Jack, to hear thee say 'dear lad.' A cheat to die like this—could have laugh'd for years yet. The dice were codd'd—last found it?"

I groped beside him, found the hilt, and held it up.

"So—'tis thine, Jack, and my mare Molly, and the letter to take. Say to Della—Hark! they are on the stairs. Say—"

With a shout the door was flung wide, and on the threshold stood the Watch, their lanterns held high and shining in Anthony's white face, and on the black stain where the doublet was thrown open.

In numbers they were six or eight, led by a small, wrynecked man that held a long staff, and wore a gilt chain over his furr'd collar. Behind, in a dozen women, peering, and Master Davenant at the back of all, his great face looming over their shoulders like a moon.

"Now, speak up, Master Short!"

"Aye, that I will—that I will; but my head is considering of affairs," answered Master Short—head of the wryneck. "One, two, three—" He look'd round the room, and finding but one capable of resisting (for the potboy was by this time in a fit), clear'd his throat, and spoke up:

"In the King's name, I arrest you all—so help me God! Now, what's the matter?"

"Murder," said I, looking up from my work of staunching Anthony's wound.

"Then forbear, and don't do it."

"Sirs," said I, laying poor Anthony's head softly back, "you are too late; whilst ye were cackling my friend is dead."

"Then, young man, thou must come along."

"Come along?"

"The charge is homicidium, or manslaughter, with or without malice premeditated."

"But—" I looked around. The potboy was insensible, and my eyes fell on Master Davenant, who slowly shook his head.

"I'll say not a word," said he, stolidly; "lost twenty pound, one time, by a lawsuit."

"Pack of fools!" I cried, driven beyond endurance. "The guilty ones escap'd these ten minutes. Now stop me who dares!"

And dashing my left fist on the nose of a watchman who would have seized me, I clear'd a space with Anthony's sword, made a run for the casement, and dropped out upon the bowling-green.

(To be continued.)

Beauty is Italy's Bane.

Florence and Venice and the rest are cursed with the burden of a most dangerous legacy from their past—the legacy of beauty. Because of this beauty (which the people themselves do not enjoy) the rich of all nations come flocking to them, bringing full purses and a disposition to spare no expense. The native begins to regard these visitors as his natural prey. Why should he work when foreigners are so easily feced? Accordingly he does not work—at least in the productive sense. He touts and begs and sells ornaments at three times their real value.

The victory instead of going to strength goes to weakness. Parents of the poorer class look upon a deformed or crippled child as a blessing, since its pitiful helplessness makes it a more efficient beggar. Into these cities, where such a fine harvest can be gathered on such easy terms, the strong, industrious peasantry are sucked until they become idle, demoralized gamblers. And all because they are the most beautiful places in the world; because their past is so glorious that strangers come from the ends of the earth to see its grave. Thus the modern Florentine lives like some horrible cannibal, upon his own dead.

—London Outlook.

The Weekly is the Paper.

The daily papers are all right if you want them, but it is the weekly paper that advertises your business, your schools, your churches, your numerous societies, sympathizes with you in your affliction and rejoices in your prosperity. In short, it is your weekly paper that mentions the thousand and one items in which you are interested during the year and which you do not find in the daily papers.

It is suggested by Professor Pickering that the streaks which radiate from lunar craters—one from Tycho is 1700 miles long—are caused by pumice thrown out by the volcano.



Codfish Baked With Cheese.

Bake into flakes two pounds of salt codfish and soak one hour; change the water once; make a white sauce with two level table-spoonsful of flour, one and one-half cupfuls of milk; salt and pepper to season; butter a baking dish; put in it alternate layers of fish and sauce, sprinkling grated American cheese between each layer; then spread over the top buttered crumbs and bake in a quick oven over half an hour.

Potted Chicken.

Boil the chicken in as little water as possible till very tender and well done. Season while boiling to suit the taste; then while hot separate the white meat from the dark, and chop both very fine.

Place the white part of a bowl, in a cross design wanted, as a circle or a cross; fill up with the dark meat, pour over it enough of the liquid left in the kettle to thoroughly moisten it; then lay a small board over it and press with heavy weights. After a few hours turn it out on a platter and ornament with sprigs of parsley.

Celery With Cream Dressing.

Wash and cut celery in inch pieces or smaller; put in a cool place until wanted; grate one cocoanut; pour over it one pint of boiling water; allow it to stand until the water is cool; then with the hand squeeze the cocoanut in the water; take it by the handful, press it tightly, and throw away; strain the mixture through a piece of cheese cloth; stand this aside until cold and the cream comes to the surface; at serving time put the celery in a glass dish, sprinkle over it a tablespoonful of grated onion, a little cayenne pepper and a little salt; skim the cream from the top of the cocoanut milk and pour it carefully over the celery; then add two table-spoonsful and serve at once.

HINTS FOR THE HOUSEKEEPER.

Always keep your celery roots and dry them. They are good for seasoning soups and sauces.

An attractive way to prepare macaroni au gratin is to bake the macaroni in a shell of Edam cheese.

Cut flowers will last much longer if a little carbonate of soda be added to the water in which they are stood.

If the bread knife is hot new bread can be cut as easily as old. But, if you would not spoil your knife, do not make it too hot.

One reason that an omelet is so often a failure is the use of too many eggs. The more eggs the more difficult the matter of turning and folding. Four eggs are all that should ever be used at one time.

After rice or macaroni is cooked, place in a colander and drain off the water, then quickly turn cold water through and you will find that the stickiness which is so undesirable will be prevented.

A good general rule: always to remember in the use of gelatines is to soften the gelatin in cold water, then to dissolve in boiling water. Neglect of either part of the process will cause trouble in making jellies.

The coffee pot should be washed as regularly as other cooking utensils, but should not be put into the water in which other dishes have been washed. It should be cleansed with fresh, hot water without soap, and then thoroughly scalded.

To cook fish in water, do not boil it. Plunge the fish into the boiling water to sear the surface and retain the juices, then reduce the heat so as to keep the water below the boiling point—180 degrees Fahrenheit is the desired temperature if one uses a thermometer in cooking.

Tinware can be kept bright indefinitely if it is washed in soap suds, to which a few bits of washing soda have been added, and placed for a few seconds either on the stove or in the sink after being wiped lightly with the dish cloth. When warmed through it should be dried with a domet flannel towel.

Glasses which have been used for milk and eggs should never be plunged in hot water. Immediately after using, fill with cold water and allow them to stand. Next wash them in lukewarm water, then in hot suds, and rinse. The result, especially if linen toweling be used, will be glassware that sparkles as if it were cut.

To clean agateware put the ware on the stove filled with water and into the water put a table-spoonful of sal soda (washing soda) and then after a while use a scouring soap and you will be pleased with the result. Also put your bean pot on the stove and a good generous table-spoonful of soda and it will wash as easily as a cup. A little soda put in your greasy baking pans and keeping them warm while washing your other dishes will help along that most disagreeable task.

Grate American dairy cheese and mix it to a paste with piquant sauce, with a few drops of kitchen bouquet. Pack it into small jars, and put on the table with toasted crackers. Many people insist upon having the cheese and crackers served with the salad, and indeed this is the proper thing. Cheese belongs with salad quite as much as it does with coffee.

It should not be removed with the salad plates, except at formal dinner, when it is brought back with the dessert or with the ice, if there be more than one dessert.

THE GREAT DESTROYER

SOME STARTLING FACTS ABOUT THE VICE OF INTEMPERANCE.

Room: The Saloon Bar—An Interesting Story About Alcoholism in France—The Government is Not Strong Enough to Restrict the Sale of Intoxicants.

A bar to heaven, a door to hell, Whoever named it, named it well, A bar to madness and wealth, A door to want and broken health.

A bar to honor, pride and fame, A door to sin and grief and shame; A bar to hope, a bar to prayer, A door to darkness and despair.

A bar to honored, useful life, A door to braving, senseless strife; A bar to all that's true and brave, A door to every drunkard's grave.

A bar to joys that home imparts, A door to tears and aching hearts, A bar to heaven, a door to hell; Whoever named it, named it well.

Alcoholism Among the Nations.

A Paris correspondent of the New York Evening Post tells an interesting story about alcoholism in France. The average consumption of alcohol at 100 degrees in France in 1830 was six and three-quarter litres to each inhabitant. It was then drunk chiefly in the form of wine. A litre is little more than a quart. The average consumption in 1900 was 18.15 litres, half in wine, a fourth in beer or cider, and a fourth in spirits. As some districts in France are still reasonably abstemious, the consumption of other districts is much above the average, Normandy and Brittany being especially drunken, and showing very serious results from it. It is not that the people get violently drunk, but that they keep themselves constantly dosed with alcohol, with ominous results in the form of disease and degeneracy. The average consumption of alcohol is estimated to be thirteen and a half litres in Switzerland, about ten in Belgium, Italy and Denmark, about nine in Germany, England and Austria, six in Holland, five in the United States and two in Canada. The poorer classes are most affected in France. The mass of the people, who are, however, intelligent enough to restrict their potations. Other countries have been as drunk as France and have reformed. In Sweden in 1823 the average annual allowance to each inhabitant was twenty-two and a half litres of pure alcohol. Now it is five litres. Finland between 1850 and 1900 came down from twenty litres to two. England, where there is a special effort now to restrict the indulgence of the drunken, has reduced her average annual per capita allowance from ten litres to nine. The great trouble at present in France seems to be that the Government is not strong enough to restrict the manufacture and sale of liquors. There are very nearly half a million wine shops in France, and last year, in spite of repressive legislation, there were 1,137,328 private distillers who made and sold brandy, and the Government is unable to prevent this enormous prevalence of private stills seems appalling. Their number has increased sevenfold since 1879. Government not only needs the votes of distillers and brandy makers, but the revenue from alcohol is indispensable. So the problem is a hard one, but it must be solved, because to neglect means destruction.—Harper's Weekly.

Nancy's Temperance Lecture.

"Years ago I owned a horse named Old Nancy. That was when I was considerably younger than I am now, and I used to carry the mail from here to Jamestown. We had to drive ten miles for the mail in those days, before the railroad was put through. In summer time the ride was not so bad, but in winter it was very hard. One day I was very warm and thirsty and thought I'd stop at the hotel and get a drink of root beer or sarsaparilla.

"I was very willing to stop and rest a bit when I drove up to the door. I did not like to get out and leave my mail in the wagon, so I beckoned to the landlord, who hurried out to see what he could do for me. He brought me a glass of root beer. He said he had no imitation stuff on hand, but would bring out the genuine article. Before I could tell him that I never drank beer or ale he had disappeared in the back room, but soon reappeared with a glass of flaming lager beer, which he proffered to me.

"Thank you much, sir," said I, "but I have no use for that stuff, and will be grateful if you will bring me a glass of water. I am thirsty, but I don't want beer. You signboard says 'Entertainment for Man and Beast.' Try her.

"I don't know whether Nancy heard me or not—perhaps she did, and felt insulted. At any rate, when he brought me the beer, she began to kick and to throw her teeth with a strong push and threw the man that was the best place for the beer. I was so angry that I broke a glass of water over her head, and she began to whinny and to kick. I called that incident 'Nancy's Temperance Lecture.'

Staving Off Utter Destruction.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat's Houston, Texas, special correspondent:

"There is a general movement among the saloon men of the State to obey the Sunday law. A year ago there was a conference of wholesalers and brewers met at Galveston at which it was decided to the best interest of every one in the business to have all the laws obeyed strictly, but this the retailers felt to be entirely too much to ask of them. Since then the local option sentiment has continued to spread throughout the State at a rate that was alarming to the liquor interests. Now the first-class saloonists in all of the cities have come to the conclusion that the only way to save their business is to demand by local sentiment. In Waco the saloons are to be kept tightly closed during the church hours, and generally so during the rest of Sunday, and this rule is being adopted in the other cities and larger towns."

Opinions of Three Judges.

Judge Charles, of Ottumwa, Ill., says: "The liquor habit is the prime cause of more crime, pauperism and misery than all other evils combined."

Judge Thomas F. Tipton, of Bloomington, Ill., says: "Over 300,000 men in this State are suffering from the effects of the liquor habit, and 250 committed the offense from the use of liquor."

Judge John C. Crabtree, of Dixon, Ill., says: "One-half of the divorce suits are traceable to the liquor habit."

More Women Alcoholics.

Statistics show that out of the total of London's curable drunkards—offenders who have been convicted more than ten times—8000 are women and 4300 hundred men. In twenty years the deaths of women from chronic alcoholism increased over 145 per cent.

Mississippi's Good Record.

Reports show that the State of Mississippi, which is one of the strongest prohibition States in the Union, all the counties being by local option, under prohibition law, had a surplus of \$1,000,000 in its treasury last year.

New Move in France.

The teetotalers of France commonly known as the French Anti-Alcoholic Association, have been holding a congress at the Hotel de Ville, Paris, and are now taking active part in the proceedings. At this congress resolutions were carried calling on the government (1) to direct that the inspectors of elementary schools should put at every examination of the children, at least one question bearing on temperance; and (2) to rescind the custom of serving a ration of brandy to the troops during the annual maneuvers; and (3) to facilitate the employment of women in manufacturing operations, so as to enable them to be utilized otherwise than for human consumption.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR MAY 22.

Subject: Jesus Teaches Humility, Mark x, 35-45—Golden Text, Mark x, 45—Memory Verses, 43-45—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.

I. An ambitious request (vs. 35-37). 35. "James and John." According to Matt. 20: 20, they made this request through their mother, Salome. She was one of the constant attendants of our Lord, and now falling on her knees, made her request. Nothing could have been more ill-timed than this selfish petition when He was going forth to His death. (Sons of Zebedee.) The father, though named, never appears in gospel history after their discipleship; from which it is inferred that he was either dead or of an insignificant character. (Saying.) However, faulty the conduct of Salome appears on this occasion, she manifested a true, unyielding love for the Saviour in the most trying time of His subsequent life.

36. "What would you?" He could not promise in a general way to grant their requests; they must state definitely what they desired. (Saying.) He asked them to state their request. 37. "Grant unto us." This request: 1. Displayed their ignorance of Christ's plans. They were looking for a kingdom of this world, and a general Messiah. 2. Was marked by forwardness and presumption. 3. Was characterized by worldliness. It apparently looked no further than the present life.

38. "Ye know not what ye ask." Ye know not the nature of your request, nor what it would involve. You suppose that if granted it would be attended only with honor and happiness; whereas, if granted, it would involve suffering and trial. "How often is it that our desires, and perhaps even our prayers, would ruin us if granted? Hence Christians are generally, with much justice, careful to pray for the things which are above, the particular blessing they desire. They may in their ignorance ask things that God sees not best. 'The cup.' To drink of a cup often, in the Scriptures, signifies to be afflicted, or sojourning in a land of strangers. (Isa. 51: 17, 22; Psa. 75: 8.) The figure is taken from a feast, where the master of the household distributes to his children and servants their portions, and he is called upon to represent the dispensation of providence; the Almighty as our common Father appointing to each of us our share of joy or suffering.

39. "We can." This was the decision of the two brothers. The half-unconscious, yet presumptuous reply was no doubt uttered under the impression that the struggle was to take place at Jerusalem. His side, and they declared themselves ready for the trial. Their reply was simply the language of human firmness. "Ye shall indeed, indeed, indeed." Ye shall indeed, indeed, indeed. They had yet to learn how serious their words were; afterwards they were enabled to drink of that cup and to be baptized with that baptism.

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